

me the look, grinning, like he  
does on those days when I forget.  
He has his place and a white  
coat to prove it. Me, I'm as odd  
as opened letters on a banker's  
desk, or a copper plated roofing  
nail. What do I know about four-  
by-fours, traps, or prefabricated  
rafters. But here I am, washed  
up, like the rest, trying to find  
my name at a table. We finish off  
a steamship round of beef, fried  
chicken, potatoes, beans, salad.  
The garbage man, tending, drinks;  
a western band tunes; and a man,  
smoother than a Cadillac, says  
that the dance should begin. I feel  
the rustle of late evening shawls,  
threads shining like fishhooks.  
And the sound of the garbage truck,  
braking on hills, rings in my head,  
warm and familiar, like salt.

-- Joseph Garrison

Staunton VA

#### OLD WOMAN IN VENICE

like a willow  
roots where you  
can't see grasp  
ing for water  
bending weep  
ing for her  
self bent over  
a parenthesis  
bending but  
not falling a  
part tho her  
life is

#### HIGH FLYING

with her big blue  
walking on wires  
looking down at  
the black snow  
blue angel  
lying down in  
her own snow  
poems burning  
all night  
in her head  
like pots in a  
grove of oranges

#### POISON IVY MADONNA

starts with three  
bumps you hardly  
notice she oozes  
makes you itch so  
you have to scratch  
then you're sorry